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ABSTRACT

In spring 1988, a study was conducted at Cuyahoga Community College's Western Campus (Ohio) to measure the reading comprehension level of a sample of 1988 students and to compare their reading test scores with the scores of students who had taken the same test in 1979 and 1980; to determine if there were a correlation between the number of items a student completed on the Nelson-Denny Reading Test (NDRT) and the number of items he or she answered correctly; to determine the percentage of high-risk students in the study population; and to measure improvements in students' reading comprehension during the course of the semester. The NDRT was administered in class to a sample of 246 students in ENG-099 and ENG-101 classes at the beginning and end of the courses. Study findings included the following: (1) there were no significant differences in test scores based on gender, age, day/evening attendance, full-/part-time status, employment, marital status, and length of time at the college; (2) the 1988 students had a significantly lower level of reading comprehension than students in the 1979 and 1980 studies; (3) students born in other countries, students enrolled in ENG-099, and students with grade point averages lower than 2.5 were identified as high-risk sub-groups; and (4) there was no significant improvement in reading comprehension for the sample group (though the low number of students who took both the pre- and post-test reduced the validity of the post-test results). (EJV)

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COMPREHENSION LEVELS OF STUDENTS IN ENTRY-LEVEL ENGLISH CLASSES AT CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, WESTERN CAMPUS

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INSTRUCTIONAL ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

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Abstract

Comprehension of Entry-Level Students

During the first three weeks of spring quarter, 1988, The Nelson Denny Reading Test, comprehension section, Form C, was administered to a sample of 246 students in ENG-099 and ENG-101 classes at Cuyahoga Community College, Western Campus. The mean score for the sample was a grade level of 11.2. Form D was administered at the end of the quarter. An analysis of paired scores showed no significant improvement in reading comprehension.

There were four major objectives for this study. The first purpose was to measure the reading comprehension level of students in ENG-099 and ENG-101 and to compare their scores with the scores of students who had taken the same reading test fall quarter 1979 and fall quarter 1980. The study indicated that the 1988 sample of students had a significantly lower level of reading comprehension than students in the 1979 (12.6 grade level) and 1980 (12.5 grade level) studies.

A second general objective of the study was to determine if there were a correlation between the number of items a student completed on the Nelson Denny and the number of items he answered correctly. There was a .767 correlation between the number of items a student finished and the number correct.

A third general objective was to determine the percentage of high risk students in the population. High risk groups within this sample were those students who scored two years below grade level thirteen. One half of the students fell in the high risk classification. Three high risk sub-groups were identified: (1) students who were born in another country; (2) students who were enrolled in ENG-099 and/or (3) students who had a GPA lower than 2.5.

A fourth general objective was to measure the degree of improvement in reading comprehension for the sample group. No significant improvement was found. The mean postscore grade level for the 155 students who took both the pre- and posttests was 10.8.

Recommendations resulting from these findings included testing reading comprehension with an untimed test in all developmental and ENG-101 classes each fall quarter and providing in-service programs for faculty on teaching reading comprehension.

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COMPREHENSION LEVELS OF STUDENTS IN ENTRY-LEVEL ENGLISH CLASSES AT CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, WESTERN CAMPUS

The purpose of this investigation was to measure the comprehension level of students in 099 and 101 English classes at Cuyahoga Community College, Western Campus. A secondary objective was to compare this data on comprehension with data collected in similar studies conducted in 1979 and 1980. A third objective was to identify high-risk groups of students. The last major objective was to measure the reading comprehension improvement of students enrolled in English classes.

The Nelson Denny Reading Test, Form C, comprehension section, was administered to 246 students in 099 and 101 English classes during the first three weeks of the 1988 spring quarter to determine the reading level of students entering the English program at the Western campus. There were 563 students enrolled in 099 and 101 classes; the sample of 246 is significant at the 95% level of confidence. Every third class was selected to participate in the study; however, to broaden the sample base, several other 099 and 101 classes were added.

The tests were administered and scored by the investigators and returned to the individual instructors. Instructors were free to discuss the scores with their students. Scores were reported in both percentiles and grade levels.

At the end of the quarter, the Nelson Denny Reading Test, Form D, comprehension section, was administered to the same groups.

SIGNIFICANCE

Improving student performance is the task which faces the College in a time of predicted declines in enrollment, lower entrance examination scores, and increased numbers of underprepared students.

Many students will drop out of college; although the reasons for students' leaving college are diverse, the College has an obligation to identify high-risk students and to provide the extra help and assistance the students might require. It is also important for faculty and administrators to have some idea of the number of high-risk students.

Faculty and students also need to know how much improvement in reading comprehension students will demonstrate after a quarter's instruction in a typical reading class.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

Test scores such as ACT and SAT scores have dropped over the years. For example, Eurich and Kraetsch (1982) administered the Minnesota Reading Examination to 1,154 freshmen at the University of Minnesota in 1978; when they compared the results with a group of 1,313 freshmen who had taken the same test at the University in 1928, they found that the 1978 group scored significantly lower ($<.01$).

A study at the Western campus was conducted to investigate the reading level of students entering Western's English classes (Gabriel, 1980). The Nelson Denny Reading Test, Form C, was given to 1556 students during the beginning of the

1979 fall quarter. The results indicated that the average student entering an English class at Western had a vocabulary score equal to the 46th percentile (13.8 grade level), a comprehension score equal to the 38th percentile (12.6 grade level), a total score equal to the 41st percentile (13.1 grade level), and a rate score equal to the 22nd percentile (9.1 Grade level). Another result of the study was the finding that 43 percent of the students could be classified as high-risk students since they scored below the 33rd percentile on the comprehension section of the test. Thus, the major conclusion from the 1979 testing was that Western's students had a serious comprehension problem. Recommendations included the following items: the teaching of both vocabulary and comprehension in reading classes, additional reading classes, and in-service faculty programs on teaching reading comprehension.

A study was conducted during the first three weeks of the 1980 fall quarter (Gabriel, 1981). The Nelson Denny Reading Test, Form C, was administered to 1792 students enrolled in 72 English 091 (what was 091 is now 099) and 101 English classes. The students' vocabulary and comprehension scores were analyzed according to the students' sex, time of day (day or evening class), and class (091 or 101). The results demonstrated that the average student entering the Western campus had a vocabulary level equal to the 48th percentile (13.9 grade level). The mean comprehension score was equal to the 38th percentile (12.5 grade level). The results of the test showed that 42 percent of Western's students could be classified as high-risk since they scored in the lower third on the comprehension section of the test. The major conclusion was that Western's students had a

serious reading problem. Recommendations included the suggestions that instructors use a directed reading approach to reading assignments, that the administration develop an adequate reading lab, that the Nelson Denny be used as part of a placement package, and that instructors consider textbook readability when they select texts.

PROCEDURES

The Nelson Denny Reading Test, form C, was given to 246 students in 099 and 101 English classes during the first three weeks of the 1988 spring quarter. Comprehension scores were analyzed to learn if correlations existed between a student's comprehension score and his sex, age, class time (day or evening), place of birth (USA or other country), student status (full- or parttime), class (099 or 101), employment status, quarter status (first-quarter student or returning student), GPA, quarter hours completed, and marital status. The mean scores of sub-groups of students were also analyzed to determine which sub-groups might be called high-risk students. Data from the 1979 and 1980 studies were compared to data from the 1988 study.

During the last two weeks of the quarter, the Nelson Denny Reading Test, Form D, comprehension section, was to have been administered to the same students who had taken the pretest. However, two classes were not included in the study because the instructor for these sections did not choose to participate in the posttesting. Also, a number of students had either dropped their English classes or were not in their classes on the day of the testing. Thus, although 246 students had taken the pretest, only 155 took the posttest.

INSTRUMENT

The Nelson Denny yields both grade-level and percentile scores for vocabulary, comprehension, total score, and rate of reading. The test was standardized in November 1972. The college sample was composed of 11 four-year colleges and 6 two-year colleges. There were 929 students in the freshman group and 1018 two-year college students. The correlation for the vocabulary and comprehension subtests was .671 for freshmen students in the sample. The reliability coefficient for the test-retest sample of college freshmen was not available. Validity, according to the publishers, is best left to the user; however, the Nelson-Denny has a .70 correlation (Pearson) with the Scholastic Aptitude Test.

POPULATION

Of the 246 students who took the test, 115 (47 percent) were male and 131 were female (53 percent). Younger students (those 24 or younger) composed 63 percent of the group, and older students (aged 25 or over) composed 37 percent of the group. Day students made up 58 percent, and evening students were 42 percent of the group. Native born students accounted for 93 percent of the group; 7 percent were born outside of this country. Parttime students accounted for 61 percent, and fulltime students accounted for 39 percent of the total. Twenty-six percent of the students were in 099, and 74 percent were in 101 classes. Twenty-eight percent of the students did not work, but 72 percent had either a full- or parttime job. Of the 264 students, 35 percent reported that this was their first quarter in college--65

percent were returning students. In terms of self-reported GPA, 35 percent were below 2.5, and 65 percent had a GPA 2.5 or above. Fifty-six percent reported that they had completed fewer than 15 quarter hours; 44 percent reported having completed 15 or more quarter hours. Seventy-three percent were not married; 27 percent reported that they were married.

Students are either placed in 097, 098, 099, or 101 English on the basis of an in-house placement test which is required of all entering students.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Possible conclusions and generalizations of the study were limited by the following:

1. Since the study was conducted during the spring quarter, the results may not be valid for the fall and winter quarters.

2. Although the study focused upon students in both the 099 and the 101 classes, the results may not be valid for all entry-level students.

3. Because the test is timed (20 minutes), the reading test may be neither a reliable nor a valid measure of reading comprehension.

4. Because the posttest was not part of a final grade, students may not have shown an honest effort.

NULL HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were tested with an independent t test.

1Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean performance of men and women on the Nelson Denny comprehension section.

2Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean performance of students aged 24 or younger and students aged 25 or older on the Nelson Denny comprehension section.

3Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean performance of day and evening students on the Nelson Denny comprehension section.

4Ho: There is no significant difference between fulltime and parttime students' comprehension scores on the Nelson Denny.

5Ho: There is no significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of native and foreign born students on the Nelson Denny.

6Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean reading comprehension scores of 099 and 101 students on the Nelson Denny.

7Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean comprehension scores of students who work and students who do not work.

8Ho: There is no significant difference in reading comprehension between students who are returning to college and first quarter students' scores.

9Ho: There is no significant difference in reading comprehension between students who have completed 15 or more hours and those who have not.

10Ho: There is no significant difference in reading

comprehension between students whose self-reported grade point average is below 2.5 and students whose self-reported grade point average is 2.5 or above.

11Ho: There is no significant difference in reading comprehension between married and non-married students.

12Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of entry-level students in the current study and the mean scores of entry-level students in the 1979 study on the Nelson Denny comprehension section.

13Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of entry-level students in the current study and the mean scores of entry-level students in the 1980 study on the Nelson Denny comprehension section.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test the next null hypothesis.

14Ho: There is no significant correlation between the number of items a student will have attempted and his score on the comprehension section of the Nelson Denny.

The next null hypothesis was tested by observing the number of students who fell into the high-risk classification.

15Ho: No more than 33 percent of the student population will be classified as high-risk students.

The following null hypothesis was tested with a dependent t test.

16Ho: There will be no significant difference between the students' pre- and posttest paired scores on the comprehension section of the Nelson Denny.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Terms used in the study are defined as follows.

Comprehension--Comprehension, as defined in the Nelson Denny Reading Test Manual (1976) involves the students' ability to note details on a literal level, and it involves the students' ability to grasp the central idea and purpose of a passage, and to make judgments about relationships.

Entering student--A student who is beginning class work at the Western campus is defined as an entering students. For purposes of this study, entry level students should have been placed in an 099 or in a 101 English class by a placement test.

High-risk student--A student who reads two years below grade level on a standardized reading test such as the Nelson Denny is a high-risk student.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The data and the tables that appear in this section are organized so that they correspond to the sequential order of the null hypotheses incorporated in the study's design. Both grade levels and percentiles were extrapolated from the manual.

1Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean performance of men and women on the Nelson Denny comprehension section.

In order to accept or reject this hypothesis, the t test of significance was implemented as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Scores of Males and Females

Group	N	%	Mean Score	SD	Grade Level	%ile
By sex						
Male	115	47%	16.565	5.540	10.9	25
Female	131	53%	17.779	5.369	11.8	34

t = 1.732 NOT SIGNIFICANT AT .05

The null-hypothesis was accepted. The data in Table 1 indicate that there is a very weak link between sex and reading comprehension. Although females did comprehend the reading material better than did males, the difference between the two groups' mean scores was not significant. The typical males in this study fell into the high-risk group in this study.

2Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean performance of students aged 24 or younger and students aged 25 or older on the Nelson Denny comprehension section.

To test this hypothesis, the t test of significance was used.

Table 2

Comparison of Scores for Young and Old Students

(Younger--Aged 24 or Below/ Older--Aged 25 or Above)

Group	N	%	Mean Score	SD	Grade Level	%ile
Younger	156	63%	17.013	5.323	11.2	28
Older	90	37%	17.544	5.734	11.5	31

t = .733 NOT SIGNIFICANT AT .05

The null-hypothesis was accepted since the t value was not significant at the .05 level. The data indicate that the difference between older students' reading comprehension and younger students' reading comprehension was not a significant difference.

3Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean performance of day and evening students on the Nelson-Denny comprehension section.

The t test was used to test the null-hypothesis as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Comparison of Scores By Day or Evening Class

Group	N	%	Mean Score	SD	Grade Level	%ile
Day	142	58%	16.852	5.663	11.1	27
Evening	104	42%	17.692	5.186	11.6	32

t = 1.191 NOT SIGNIFICANT AT .05

The null-hypothesis was accepted since the t value was not significant at the .05 level. Although evening students did comprehend circa .5 year better than day students, the difference was not significant.

4Ho: There is no significant difference between fulltime and parttime students' comprehension scores on the Nelson Denny.

The t test was used to test the null-hypothesis as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Scores By Student Status

Group	N	%	Mean Score	SD	Grade Level	%ile
Parttime	150	61%	17.733	5.501	11.7	33
Fulltime	96	39%	16.385	5.350	10.8	24

t = 1.895 NOT SIGNIFICANT AT .05

Although parttime students' reading comprehension level was almost one year above the level of fulltime students' reading level, the t test was accepted since there is no significant difference between the mean comprehension scores of parttime and fulltime students. Fulltime students fell into the high-risk category.

5Ho: There is no significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of native and foreign born students on the Nelson Denny

To test this hypothesis, the data in Table 5 were subjected to a t test.

Table 5

Scores By Place of Birth

(USA or Other Country)

Group	N	%	Mean Score	SD	Grade Level	%ile
USA	228	93%	17.588	5.386	11.6	32
Other	18	7%	12.389	4.189	8.4	9

t = 3.998 SIGNIFICANT AT .001

The null hypothesis was rejected since there was a significant difference between the mean scores of native and foreign born students. Native born students read at the 32nd percentile, and foreign born students read at the 9th percentile.

6Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean reading comprehension scores of 099 and 101 students on the Nelson Denny.

To test this hypothesis, the t test of significance was employed.

Table 6

Scores By Class

(099 English or 101 English)

Group	N	%	Mean Score	SD	Grade Level	%ile
099	64	26%	14.859	5.086	9.8	16
101	182	74%	18.033	5.374	11.9	35

t = 4.119 SIGNIFICANT AT .001

The t test was rejected. The mean English 101 student's reading comprehension score was about two years above the mean English 099 student's comprehension score, and the difference was significant at .001.

7Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean comprehension scores of students who work and students who do not work.

To test null hypothesis 7, a t test was used.

Table 7

Scores By Employment Status

Group	N	%	Mean Score	SD	Grade Level	%ile
Not Employed	69	28%	16.609	5.826	11	26
Employed	177	72%	17.441	5.326	11.4	30

t = 1.072 NOT SIGNIFICANT AT .05

The null hypothesis was accepted since there was no significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of students who worked and students who did not work.

8Ho: There is no significant difference in reading comprehension between students who are returning to college and first quarter students.

A t test was used to test the hypothesis.

Table 8

Scores By Quarter Status

(1st Quarter in College or Returning Student)

Group	N	%	Mean Score	SD	Grade Level	%ile
1st quarter	85	35%	16.494	5.433	10.9	25
Returning	161	65%	17.584	5.471	11.6	32

t = 1.489 NOT SIGNIFICANT AT .05

The hypothesis was accepted because the difference between first quarter students' comprehension and returning students' comprehension was not significant at .05. First quarter students' mean comprehension, however, placed them in the high risk student group.

9Ho: There is no significant difference in reading comprehension between students who have completed 15 or more hours and those who have not.

To test this hypothesis, a t test was employed and as shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Scores By Quarter Hours Completed

(Under 15 Hours; 15 or More)

Group	N	%	Mean Score	SD	Grade Level	%ile
Under 15	137	56%	16.971	5.254	11.1	27
15 or over	109	44%	17.505	5.744	11.5	31

t = .759 NOT SIGNIFICANT AT .05

The null hypothesis was accepted since the difference between the two groups of scores was not significant. The group of students who had completed fewer than 15 hours did, however, not read as well as the group who had completed 15 or more hours.

10Ho: There is no significant difference in reading comprehension between students whose self-reported grade

point average is below 2.5 and students whose self-reported grade point average is 2.5 or above.

A t test was used to test the hypothesis.

Table 10

Scores By Self-reported GPA

(Below 2.5; 2.5 or Above)

Group	N	%	Mean Score	SD	Grade Level	%ile
Below	85	35%	16.224	5.286	10.7	23
Above	161	65%	17.727	5.512	11.7	33

t = 2.063 SIGNIFICANT AT .05

The null hypothesis was rejected since there is a significant difference between the reading comprehension of students whose self-reported grade point average was below 2.5 and for students who reported a grade point average of 2.5 or higher. Students in the low group were also in the high risk group of students.

11Ho: There is no significant difference in reading comprehension between married and non-married students.

To test the null hypothesis, a t test was employed as shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Scores By Marital Status

Score	N	%	Mean Score	SD	Grade Level	%ile
Not married	179	73%	16.816	5.600	11.1	27
Married	67	28%	18.254	5.001	12	36

t = 1.844 NOT SIGNIFICANT AT .05

The null hypothesis was accepted although the comprehension level of the married students in the study was almost one year above the comprehension level of the unmarried students. The difference was not significant at .05.

12Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of entry-level students in the current study and the mean scores of entry-level students in the 1979 study on the Nelson Denny comprehension section.

The t test of significance was used to test the null-hypothesis.

Table 12

Comprehension Scores: 1979 and 1988

Score	N	Mean Score	SD	Grade Level	%ile
1979 Study	1556	18.565	5.810	12.6	38
1988 Study	246	17.207	5.471	11.2	28

t = 3.433 SIGNIFICANT AT .001

The null hypothesis was rejected because there was a significant difference between the mean comprehension score of the 1979 group and the mean comprehension score of the 1988 group. Table 12 shows that the difference between the two groups was well over one year.

13Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of entry-level students in the current study and the mean scores of entry-level students in the 1980 study on the Nelson-Denny comprehension section.

A t test was used to test this null hypothesis and as shown in Table 13.

Table 13

Comparison of 1980 and 1988 Groups

Group	N	Mean Score	SD	Grade Level	%ile
1980 Study	1792	18.480	5.950	12.5	38
1988 Study	246	17.207	5.471	11.2	28

t = 3.176 SIGNIFICANT AT .01

There is a significant difference between the mean scores of entry-level students in the current study and the mean scores of entry-level students in the 1980 study on the Nelson Denny comprehension section. The null hypothesis was rejected.

14Ho: There is no significant correlation between the number of items a student will have attempted and his score on the comprehension section of the Nelson Denny.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test the null hypothesis.

Table 14

Items Attempted

N	246
Min Score	6
Max Score	36
Mean Score	25.703
SD	6.346
Correlation #finished w/ #correct	.767

Since the correlation between the number of items the students attempted and the number of correct items was not at least .80, the null hypothesis was, therefore, accepted.

15H0: No more than 33 percent of the student population will be classified as high-risk students.

Since 132 students did not score above 17 points on the test, they fell at least two years below grade level. The 132 students made up 50 percent of the population, and the null hypothesis was rejected.

16Ho: There will be no significant difference between the students' paired pre- and posttest scores on the comprehension section of the Nelson Denny.

A dependent t test was used to test the null hypothesis.

Table 15

Posttest

N of Cases	155
Minimum Score	2
Maximum Score	36
Mean	16.265
SD	5.729
Grade Level	10.8
Percentile	22

Table 16

Paired Scores (Pre- and Posttests)

Mean Difference Between Paired Samples	0.581
SD Difference	5.630

t = 1.284 NOT SIGNIFICANT

There is no significant difference between the pre- and posttest paired scores. The null hypothesis was accepted.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A summary of the 13 essential findings is listed below.

Null hypothesis 1: accepted

Null hypothesis 2: accepted

Null hypothesis 3: accepted

Null hypothesis 4: accepted

Null hypothesis 5: rejected

Null hypothesis 6: rejected

Null hypothesis 7: accepted

Null hypothesis 8: accepted

Null hypothesis 9: accepted

Null hypothesis 10: rejected

Null hypothesis 11: accepted

Null hypothesis 12: rejected

Null hypothesis 13: rejected

Null hypothesis 14: accepted

Null hypothesis 15: rejected

Null hypothesis 16: accepted

DISCUSSION

According to the study, students who were non-natives, or enrolled in an 099 English class, or had a grade point average below 2.5 had significantly worse reading comprehension scores than students who were native speakers, or students in 101 English, or students who had grade point averages 2.5 or better.

The following sub-groups' mean scores placed them in the high-risk category--fulltime students, males, non-natives, 099 English students, first quarter students, and students with low grade point averages.

Reading comprehension scores have dropped significantly in the last eight years. For whatever reasons the scores have dropped, the College has an obligation to provide increased support for the student body. Since 50 percent of the students in entry-level English classes are high-risk students, the problem of poor reading comprehension is critical.

One criticism of the study is that the study does not reflect the general population of students at the Western campus.

Because of the low number (155) of students who took both the pretest and the posttest, the posttest results are not meaningful. Although the test results show that the students regressed in reading comprehension, the students may not, in fact, have regressed. Students knew that the posttest was not part of a grade and may not have shown a great deal of effort on the test. Since the test was given at the end of the quarter--a busy time for most instructors--the instructors may have indicated to students that the test results were less than important. The Nelson Denny was never intended to measure

reading comprehension improvement. Last, a period of eight to ten weeks may not be enough time to demonstrate significant improvement in reading comprehension.

IMPLICATIONS

On the campus level, there is nothing in the data to suggest that the entering students' reading comprehension skills will improve in the following years. The decline in reading scores reflects the decline in SAT scores on the national level.

Without adequate learning assistance, students in the next decade can expect academic problems on the Western campus.

Diagnosis and remediation of students' reading problems must be an administrative and a faculty priority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the study's findings, the following recommendations are suggested.

1. Since the Nelson Denny is a timed test and since the time limit serves only as an administrative convince, our suggestion is that students be tested with an untimed test such as the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP). An untimed test gives students who require additional time the chance to work through reading exercises without feeling stress or without feeling the need to guess at items.

2. Students who classify as high-risk students should be required to enroll in developmental classes and should not be given the opportunity to take regular college-level classes until

the high-risk students can bring their reading skills up to at least two years below grade level. These students should also be required to have completed the College Survival Class (Gen 100) before they begin regular college studies.

3. Students who have some of the characteristics of high-risk students or who fit the high-risk profile (fulltime, male, non-native, 099 English student, first quarter student, low GPA) should meet with a guidance counselor at least once each quarter to review academic concerns.

4. The fulltime and the parttime teaching faculty should be given the opportunity to learn how to diagnose and treat reading problems. The techniques could be taught to faculty on an in-service basis between quarters.

5. Each fall quarter, a sample of the student population in 099 and 101 classes should be given a reading test to determine the reading level of students entering the Western campus.

6. Instructors should select textbooks based upon the knowledge that Western's students do not comprehend as well as they did eight or nine years ago.

7. Since the student population's mean reading comprehension has dropped significantly in the past eight years, the College must increase the budget and the services of the learning center; the learning center should, therefore, be a leading force in helping students to stay in college through the identification of high-risk students prior to the students' having begun college level classes.

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